

Several farmers in the Lower Arkansas Valley own shares in the Rocky Ford Ditch. Some of the ditches like this one west of Rocky Ford.

\$1 million question

Some would profit greatly from water deal

Proprietor's Name	Number of shares owned for sale	Estimated revenue*
Ascherman, Ronal	21,87500	\$1,225,000
Beebe, Ruth and Margaret	1,00000	58,000
Boyer, Wayne and Judy	0,10000	5,800
Brace, Fred L. and Frances N.	1,75000	98,000
Burns, Edwin	1,75000	98,000
Burns, Bill	5,65000	327,600
Buller, Nancy J.	1,00000	58,000
Coutler, David F. and Alice K.	1,00000	58,000
Cramer, Carol and Don	1,00000	58,000
Delgado, Luis	1,50000	84,000
Denton, Bruce A. and Regina J.	1,12500	63,000
Ditzman, Joseph and Edna	0,20000	11,200
Falnamon, Scott and Laura B.	2,93750	164,500
Fioritz, Peggy L. Proctor	1,50000	84,000
Fulford, Thomas A.	3,00000	168,000
Gagano, Mollie	8,11904	454,886
Galego, Sarah	0,10000	5,800
Gardner, Alvin and Linda E.	23,50000	1,318,000
Gardner, Janet and Matthew	1,00000	58,000
GO Farming	4,30000	240,000
Giffin, Huber Company	1,25000	70,000
Giffin, J.I.	16,00000	896,000
Heister, Larry Sr. and Larry J.	0,10000	5,800
Holder, Carl	8,11904	454,886
Hodder, Frank	13,18344	738,832
Hodder, Frank and Greta	16,00000	896,000
Huber, Orel	13,18344	738,832
Hunter, J. Hal	3,20000	179,200
Hunter, J. Hal	8,11904	454,886
Holly, Frances A.	14,95000	837,250
Honaman, David A. and Betty J.	1,00000	58,000
Howe, Ruth M., Dora A., Kelly R.	2,00000	112,000
Keane, John	2,00000	112,000
Laurent, Christine K.	2,30000	129,800
Mamede, Herbert, Goldie, Masako	27,25000	1,528,000
Martinez, Lazaro and Flora	0,02500	1,400
Medina, George	0,10000	5,800
Medina, Jose G. and Julia A.	0,30000	17,400
Malmer, Wayne and Dawn	2,40000	134,400
Morrison Enterprises	17,50000	980,000
Padilla, John and Maria	1,00000	58,000
Parrington, Dean and Maylene	8,75000	490,000
Patcock, Jane and Shaven, Karen Scott	2,93750	164,500
Proctor, Dwight E. and Julia Ann	26,25000	1,470,000
Pycroft, Matthew T.	1,00000	58,000
Proctor, Vernon E. and Joan W.	14,50000	812,000
Ryan, James	0,25000	14,000
Sandlin, William and Janet	1,50000	84,000
Talbot, Joe L. and Agnes	0,10000	5,800
Taupke, Joe and Marc	0,10000	5,800
Wallace, Stanley and Sidney	0,10000	5,800

*Revenue based on net payment of an estimated \$28,000 per share. The exact payment per share will be set by water court.

The Pueblo Chieftain

Several farmers in the Lower Arkansas Valley will receive more than \$1 million if the proposed sale of Rocky Ford Ditch water to the city of Aurora is approved by the state's water court.

For several months, *The Pueblo Chieftain* has been trying to obtain a list of sellers and the number of Rocky Ford Ditch shares each has put up for sale to Aurora.

Aurora officials released the list this past week.

As previously reported, there are 51 "sellers" of about 288 shares, although some "sellers" actually represent more than one person. For example, there are a number of couples who are selling water but are listed as one "seller."

As indicated in the accompanying graphic, more than one-third of the group are trying to sell one share or less. There are five "sellers," mostly families, who each

stand to net more than \$1 million if their family proceeds are totaled.

The Chieftain has made several calls this week to the Holder, Gardner, Proctor and Mamede families and Ron Ascherman to discuss with them their plans, but they have not returned calls.

In the past, members of some of those families have said they planned to continue farming in the area on land they own that is watered by other irrigation canals. Others, such as Ascherman, have said they are getting out of farming.

Shareholders can only sell a small proportion of the total water they receive from their shares in the ditch, an amount called the "consumptive-use" portion.

The consumptive-use portion is the amount of irrigation water that a crop actually "drinks." The rest, which seeps into ditch banks or the ground or washes off a field and flows to the river, can't be sold because water users downstream

depend on it.

Objectors in the current case have made it clear they will never agree to any higher consumptive-use figure because allowing Aurora to take more water per share would shortchange other water users.

Aurora wants to buy a total of about 288 shares, which is expected to dry up 2,860 acres of farm land.

Shareholders already have been paid \$1,100 per share, but won't see the bulk of their money until the case is settled in a special district court called "water court." There, a water judge will make certain that the sale won't take water from any of the farmers, towns or other people objecting to the sale.

The case won't be settled until at least next year and could drag on for several years afterward. Aurora has written a draft of the court decree that would give it the Rocky Ford Ditch water, which will serve

Please see Ditch, Page 3A

● Ditch

Continued from Page 1A

as a starting point for negotiations between Aurora and the objectors.

The decree will spell out specific details of Aurora's assumption of the Rocky Ford rights and its ability to trade that water upstream, where it will be pumped over the mountains north to the Platte River Valley.

For example, the decree will forbid Aurora from trading its water upstream if the Arkansas River isn't flowing at certain minimum levels, which would hurt water quality below Lake Pueblo.

Sellers can plant their own fields in permanent grass, a practice called revegetation that is now required when irrigation water is sold off a farm. If sellers don't finish revegetating in three growing seasons, or elect not to revegetate at all, Aurora will pay for it to be done and deduct \$264 per acre from the purchase price.

Shareholders can use their water until the deal closes and must pay their portions of whatever ditch maintenance costs arise before then.